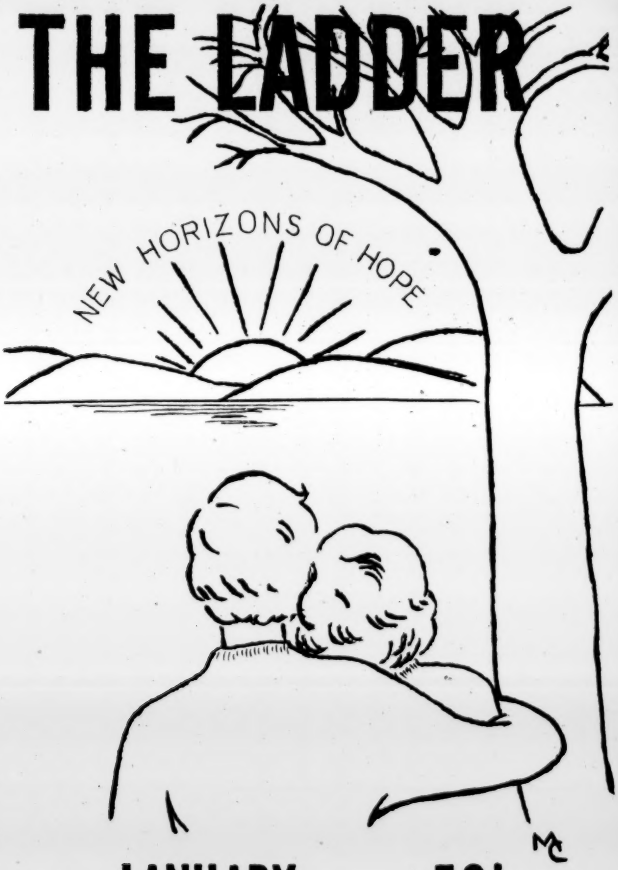
THE LADDER



JANUARY 50¢

purpose of the

Daughters of BILITIS

A WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING THE INTEGRATION OF THE HOMOSEXUAL INTO SOCIETY BY:

1. Education of the variant, with particular emphasis on the psychological, physiological and sociological aspects, to enable her to understand herself and make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic and economic implications--this to be accomplished by establishing and maintaining as complete a library as possible of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public discussions on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by advocating a mode of behavior and dress acceptable to society.

2. Education of the public at large through acceptance first of the individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices; through public discussion meetings aforementioned; through dissemination of educational literature on the homosexual theme.

3. Participation in research projects by duly authorized and responsible psychologists, sociologists and other such experts directed towards further knowledge of the homosexual.

4. Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposal of changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group, and promotion of these changes through due process of law in the state legislatures.

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the Ladder

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THE LADDER is regarded as a sounding board for various points of view on the homophile and related subjects and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the organization

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COVER BY M.C.

Mrs Morrison's Casserole

Mrs. Morrison bustled about her kitchen happily. It was a cold sunny December afternoon and she was busy fixing her favorite casserole. It would be such a nice surprise for Sue and Donnie and their young men on New Year's Eve. She hadn't cooked this casserole for three years. "Not since Charlie died," she mused to herself as she added fragrant spices to the mixture in the bowl before her. It had been so long since she had felt like cooking much, being alone in the big empty house.

When Mrs. Walford from her Sunday school class had suggested roomers, Mrs. Morrison rejected the idea, at least at first. Then one day when she felt more lonely than usual she put an ad in the paper. The next evening she rented out the big bedroom upstairs and the sitting room next to it to two nice young working girls. They were friendly but very busy with their work. Still, their presence helped to fill the old house.

They had asked her if she minded their bringing in a hotplate and she was pleased and bought a small refrigerator for them to use. Mrs. Morrison was sure they didn't eat well, though. After all, two young unmarried girls probably didn't bother to cook properly. From time to time she took pie or cookies up to them and though they thanked her warmly enough, she felt like an intruder whenever she went into their rooms. Donnie, the older girl, was very shy and seldom talked at all. Sue was a friendlier girl and Mrs. Morrison tried hard to "mother" her. Mrs. Morrison was always telling Mrs. Walford how nice they were and how little trouble.

Sometimes Mrs. Morrison worried about them. They didn't seem to be popular at all and it didn't seem fair. After all, Donnie was quite a - well, not pretty - but handsome girl and Sue was very warm and sweet. Mrs.

Morrison often thought that Sue would make a lovely mother. However, through all the year and a half they had lived in her house, not one boy had come to call. Mrs. Jackson, next door, had suggested slyly to Mrs. Morrison that perhaps boys came to call late in the evening. Mrs. Morrison had sniffed at that and had hardly spoken to Mrs. Jackson for nearly a week. Why, those girls were just not that kind at all. She certainly had lived long enough to know the difference between good girls and bad girls. Her two roomers were definitely good girls.

On Saturday mornings Mrs. Morrison always heard them laughing as they cleaned their rooms and later they would go out and come in with groceries. Sometimes they went out to a show and once they took her to a drive-in-theater. She really liked that and hoped they would ask her again. Donnie had driven so carefully and she hadn't been at all frightened as she usually was in a car. Once Mrs. Morrison thought of inviting herself to a show and offering to pay all their ways but natural timidity conquered that idea.

The sound of the front door opening stopped Mrs. Morrison's train of thought and she heard the girls come in, talking together excitedly as they went up to their rooms. Mrs. Morrison smiled and put the casserole into the oven. Those two certainly were sounding pleased. "I wonder what kind of boys were coming to see them," she thought half aloud. Sue had told her yesterday that she and Donnie would be having guests for New Year's Eve if she didn't mind. Mrs. Morrison had told her she didn't mind at all and of course she and Donnie could have guests whenever they wished.

Mrs. Morrison was sure those young men would be pleased by her casserole. Charlie had loved it and guests always raved over it, especially the men.

At 6:30 the front bell rang and Mrs. Morrison heard Sue and Donnie come down to answer the door. Mrs. Morrison listened as hard as she felt was proper but couldn't tell much of the conversation before the four went upstairs. She waited a few minutes and then followed

carrying her steaming casserole. Donnie came to the door and Mrs. Morrison started her carefully planned remarks about boys and their appetites before she looked around the room.

There was Sue looking startled and Donnie standing by the door, but instead of two young men, there were two women seated on Mrs. Morrison's old flowered sofa. One of them looked a little like Donnie and the other a dark smaller version of Sue.

Always quick to grasp any situation, Mrs. Morrison bubbled about young hearty appetites and made her exit after a minute of "thank you's" and small talk.

She walked down the stairs sadly shaking her head. There certainly wasn't such a shortage of young men when she was a girl. Why there were always boys around to bring in the New Year.

- by Gene Damon

WOMEN IN PANTS - THE COMING THING

More of the nation's fair sex will be sporting pants this year than ever before according to an article by Natalie Best of United Press International.

"Every woman from 2 to 92 will have some version of shorts, slacks or stocking leotards in her wardrobe," said sportswear designer Stephanie Koret.

"Short shorts, smarty pants (that's midcalf length) and bachelors (ankle length) are the most popular," Miss Koret said. But Bermudas (mid-calf length), fishermen's pants (just below knee length) and capri pants (mid-knee and ankle) will come into their own this year. They are especially good for the over 40 age group," she said.

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2-Hour Broadcast on Homophile Problem

"The Homosexual in Society", a two-hour broadcast presented by KPFA-FM, a non-profit listener-subscription radio station in Berkeley, California, during November brought such popular acclaim that the program was repeated a month later and will be issued in pamphlet form as well.

The program consisted of two separate panel discussion sound tapes, the first covering "The Role of the Homosexual as an Individual and as a Member of Society" and the second "The Role Society Should Play" in solving the homophile problem.

THE ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Hal Call, publications director of the Mattachine Society and editor of the MATTACHINE REVIEW, opened the discussion by outlining the educational program of the organization to lead "to a better understanding of the homosexual and other forms of variance where there is no great harm to the social order."

According to Dr. Blanche Baker, San Francisco psychiatrist, there is much controversy on the subject, "even in the medical profession." There are those who feel it is a neurotic problem and others who call it glandular, or even a hereditary problem.

"For myself, from many years of work, I consider the homosexual first of all a human being," she stated. "I believe in individual adjustment of each particular case. Factors leading to homosexuality lie deep in the individual nature. It is a psychological problem in which early childhood has its effect. All people have a certain amount of maleness and femaleness in their constitution, and child experiences tend to throw us to one side of the scale or the other."

FIRST REACTION OF SHOCK

When questioned by Elsa Knight Thompson, moderator, Mrs. Leah Gailey, housewife and mother, replied, "My first reaction was a universal one - shock. There was ostracism

to face for me and my son. It was clearly - shock. But basically I loved my son, so I decided I would try to understand. Fear is based on the unknown, and much fear disappears as one learns to understand.

"There is much literature on the layman level for anyone to read," she pointed out. "It is just a matter of understanding and accepting."

Mr. Call declared that the problem of homosexuality is very often closer to all of us than many realize - a member of the family, a neighbor, a co-worker, a friend.

"Approximately every tenth adult may be predominantly homosexual in orientation," he stated. "This covers the entire strata of society, every intellectual and economic level."

Mr. Call said that there had not necessarily been an increase in homosexuality in recent years, as some have supposed, but rather a greater awareness of the subject.

HOSTILITY - CAUSE OR EFFECT?

Moderator Thompson posed the problem of "hostility" in the homosexual. Does it stem from the individual because of his fear of being "different"? Or is it a result of society's attitude?

Mr. Call said that the homosexual adopts attitudes as result of the society in which he lives. He may effect certain mannerisms of hostility toward society because of its attitudes and also because of his inability to accept himself.

According to Mrs. Gailey, the homosexual's hostility is based on fear from society and guilt from self. The homosexual has both problems to face, she said.

Dr. Baker pointed out that in her field she works on self-acceptance so that the individual can relax and be more comfortable in the world he lives in.

When asked if her clients wished to rid themselves of their

homosexuality or if they sought acceptance, Dr. Baker said, "Most of those who come to me want to get rid of this approach to life. If the heterosexual component potential is large enough to function with, fine. But many cases just don't have the potential."

ARE HOMOSEXUALS GIFTED PEOPLE?

Dr. Baker said she had no statistics on the subject, that she herself worked with small numbers of people, "But the ones who come to me are artists - versatile, gifted people, not just bread, meat and potatoes people."

Mr. Call did not consider this a just evaluation. He said that homosexuals are no more gifted or talented than any other group, but that perhaps the homosexual has more opportunity to develop creative and artistic talents since he doesn't have the economic pressure of providing for a wife and family.

Elsa Knight Thompson suggested that, as in the case of any other minority group, there is more concentration to excel in order to counteract criticism.

"This is true job-wise," Mrs. Gailey declared. "Because of his fear of detection, the homosexual puts forth an utmost effort to do his best."

HOMOSEXUAL COUPLES

On consideration of the short duration of most homosexual relationships, Dr. Baker asserted, "The friction between homosexual couples is due to the hate in themselves and an unhappy adjustment to life. The over-emphasis on a sexual level would keep them from adjusting on other levels."

Mr. Call pointed out that there were many lasting homosexual relationships that are not known or recognized, and Dr. Baker admitted, "We are all too conscious of those who do not get along together and don't know about those who do."

Mr. Call concluded the first panel discussion with a resume of legal attitudes in Europe and the United States. In England last September the Wolfenden Report recommended

that homosexual acts between consenting adults no longer be considered a crime provided they are conducted in private, do not involve minors, no force or violence or fraud is used and do not offend public decency. In April, 1955, in our own country the American Law Institute in its draft of a Model Penal Code recommended essentially the same things.

In Denmark a change in the law was made in 1933, he said, but while not illegal, the stigma attached to homosexuality still remains. Persecution is particularly severe in Germany and Austria today despite previous progress and is reported to be the result of our own American occupation. In this country we have 48 different states with 48 different sets of laws concerning certain homosexual acts ranging from misdemeanor penalties of 30 days to maximum penalties of life imprisonment.

BASIS OF AMERICAN SEX LAWS

Dr. Karl Bowman, psychiatrist who until recently was director of the Langley Porter Clinic of the University of California School of Medicine in San Francisco, opened the second discussion with some historical background on our present laws, which he said are "largely traced back to ancient Hebrew laws." The Christian religion took over the Jewish code which was extremely restrictive pertaining to sexual behavior. And the English law, on which United States law is based, stemmed from the Christian code.

"If this is so, it is my contention," Dr. Bowman added, "it is time to re-examine our laws in the light of present knowledge and recommend modifications."

WHAT IS A HOMOSEXUAL?

Dr. Frank Beach Jr., anthropologist and professor of psychology at the University of California at Berkeley, deplored the fact that nowhere in the previous discussion had there been a definition of the term "homosexual". He recounted the varying degrees of homosexual behavior: the latent individual who has tendencies but who manifests no overt behavior, the individual who has one or two experi-

ences in his life time, those who find satisfaction in both homosexual and heterosexual behavior, and those with exclusive homosexual experience.

Dr. Bowman pointed out that in the armed forces mere diagnosis of latent homosexuality makes an individual unsuitable and subject to an undesirable discharge which interferes seriously with the individual's ability to secure a position. Some one who has never violated any law and who has never had a homosexual experience thus becomes a victim, he said.

Relative to the problem of who is a homosexual, Morris Lowenthal, San Francisco attorney, spoke of the 1955 law passed by the California state legislature that any bar or restaurant becoming a "resort for sexual perverts" may have its license revoked. The problem of the proprietor is two-fold, he said, since the 1951 California Supreme Court decision in the Stoumen vs. Reilly case upheld the civil right of the homosexual to meet and eat or drink in any public bar or restaurant, while the new law in direct conflict prohibits the use of these premises as a gathering place for homosexuals. Mr. Lowenthal also posed the issue as to how the bartender or owner can determine the homosexual tendencies of his patrons.

CAUSES OF HOMOSEXUALITY

Dr. Beach said that hereditary factors may be involved, since in some genetic studies the incidence of homosexuality was higher in identical twins. There is also evolutionary evidence based on observation of other mammals. Exclusive, overt homosexuality does not occur in any other species but man, he pointed out, however. In cases of error in identification of sex at birth, Dr. Beach added that it was extremely difficult to reverse the sex if it was established in the mind of the individual.

Dr. Bowman agreed that there were multiple causes, that heredity, physical condition and psychological conditioning all played an important role.

"The crux of the matter," asserted Dr. David Wilson, attorney and psychiatrist of the University of California

School of Criminology at Berkeley, "is the law making something a crime. Society passes a law because it feels threatened, but it doesn't work and in no way affects the amount of homosexuality. If the law doesn't work, it should be reappraised and handled in a realistic manner.

"The propensity is there or it could not develop. We can not change basic individual factors. Unless we know why, we can't pass laws to curb the incidence of homosexuality."

Mr. Lowenthal advanced the theory that homosexuals have been discouraged in cultures when an increase in population was needed for survival and encouraged when it was necessary to curb the population.

"Naive assumption!" Dr. Wilson interjected. "Homosexuals are not going to be the productive members of society in any case."

Dr. Beach also rejected the idea, "Human beings don't behave this rationally." Prohibitions appear in many societies, he added.

Dr. Bowman considered the population theory a rationalization. "Cultures that allow homosexuality freely have in many cases had a higher increase in population than those who have not."

"Rejection of the homosexual is purely on an emotional basis and tied up with our general repressive attitude toward all sex behavior," he added.

VAGUE AND AMBIGUOUS LAWS

In our criminal laws, many of which are not enforced, it was pointed out by Attorney Lowenthal that no reference is made to homosexuals specifically. Vague and ambiguous laws are used and abused against the homosexual resulting in his subjection to blackmail.

Dr. Bowman pointed out that the California law reads, "Anyone guilty of the infamous crime against nature..." The use of such wording has led to long controversies, he stated.

Dr. Beach took exception to the "crime against nature." The capacity for homosexual activity is inherent in nature - in man's biological constitution - and there is therefore nothing "unnatural" in homosexual activity, he said.

"It would appear then that the law is vague, open to loose interpretation and capable of injustice to the individual where invoked against him, bearing no fruit from the social standpoint," Elsa Knight Thompson, the moderator, put in.

"Laws to prevent crimes of violence and violation of children would satisfy my requirements of a fair law," Dr. Wilson asserted. "Homosexuality is a medical and social problem, not a legal one."

Mr. Lowenthal declared that a strange situation existed where it has been granted by the California Appellate Court that the homosexual is no menace to society and has no particular propensity toward crime, yet at the level of police and certain legislators he is declared a menace and attempts are made to whittle away the civil rights of the individual.

"The mere existence of a law can be a threat to an individual even though it may not be enforced or can be overturned at a higher court level," Dr. Wilson said. However, he did not hold out much hope for immediate action. The legislators won't change the law until they understand more. It will take a great deal of time and education, of which this program is a step.

Pointing out some of the abuses of the law such as police harrassment, registration as sex offender and entrapment, Mr. Lowenthal said he believed that if these injustices were brought to the attention of the public, it might offend the decency of most people.

Dr. Wilson pointed out that a change in the law would not eliminate altogether the problem of blackmail because of the moral issue, though the degree would certainly be much less.

Moderator Thompson summed up the discussion, "Homosexuality is not a question of crime. If society is to solve the problem it must be done with enlightenment, understanding

and a scientific approach at the individual level."

OVERWHELMING RESPONSE TO BROADCAST

According to officials of KPFA, almost all of the heavy mail received after the first broadcast congratulated them on their courage and observed that they would undoubtedly be attacked for the program. However, they did not have a single attack for presenting the program - technical criticism, yes, but no indictment.

Because of the overwhelming response to the program, "The Homosexual in Society" is being made available in pamphlet form and can be obtained from Station KPFA, 2207 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley 4, California, for $1.00.

- Del Martin

OFFICIALS URGE COMPULSORY CARE
OF SEXUAL DEVIATES

Lack of therapeutic care available to homosexuals and other sexual deviates was scored by law enforcement officials at a forum sponsored by the Manhattan College Institute for Forensic Research and the Metropolitan Law Enforcement Conference in Riverdale, N.Y., last month.

"The crux of the problem is a crying need for psychiatric treatment" said Thomas J. O'Rourke of the New York Transit Authority Police, citing the Institute for Forensic Research as an organization capable of evolving a new approach to a possible solution.

Dr. Ralph S. Banay, psychiatrist and medical director of Youth Institute, warned that homosexuality often leads to more violent crimes including homicide and held that psychotherapy can be effective in treatment of homosexuals only if those so afflicted are strongly motivated to overcome the problem.

He stressed the "urgency and necessity" of establishing clinics where homosexuals can be treated individually or in groups and said therapy should be made compulsory.

'Attitudes on Sex Cause Crimes'

THAT CRIME AND OTHER ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR IN THIS COUNTRY IS CAUSED "TO A LARGE EXTENT" BY REPRESSION OF NORMAL SEXUAL DRIVES WAS DECLARED BY DR. BENJAMIN KARPMAN, CHIEF PSYCHOTHERAPIST AT ST. ELIZABETH'S HOSPITAL, IN A TALK TITLED "SEX, SANITY AND SOCIETY" BEFORE CRIMINOLOGISTS ATTENDING THE 1958 CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE IN WASHINGTON, D.C., LATE LAST MONTH.

DR. KARPMAN SAID THAT AMERICANS KNOW A BIT ABOUT SANITY AND SOCIETY BUT "PRACTICALLY NOTHING" ABOUT SEX.

"OUR SOCIETY IS SUFFERING FROM AN OVERWHELMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE REPRESSION OF SEX," HE SAID. "WE STILL DON'T KNOW HOW TO RAISE CHILDREN SEXUALLY."

"BECAUSE OUR NORMAL SEXUAL DRIVES ARE NOT ALLOWED NORMAL EXPRESSION, THE SEXUAL ENERGY OVERFLOWS INTO ALL SORTS OF CHANNELS CREATING SOCIAL DISORGANIZATION AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY."

THESE CHANNELS, DR. KARPMAN DIVIDED INTO TWO GROUPS. HE SAID ONE INCLUDED "THE PROSTITUTE, THE ALCOHOLIC, THE HOMOSEXUAL, THE NEUROTIC, THE PSYCHOTIC, THE PSYCHOPATH, THE GAMBLER, AND THOSE INVOLVED IN DESERTION, DIVORCE, SUICIDE, MIGRATION, THE PROBLEMS OF THE FOREIGN BORN AND CHILD LABOR. IMPLICATED ALSO ARE CORRUPTION, UNEMPLOYMENT AND RACIAL TENSIONS," HE ADDED.

IN THE SECOND AND MORE ANTISOCIAL GROUP DR. KARPMAN INCLUDED ADULT CRIMINALS IN "VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF ROBBERY, MURDER, EMBEZZLEMENT, AND SO ON - PREDATORY OFFENSES WHICH OFTEN HAVE SEXUAL IMPLICATIONS."

HE SAID THIS GROUP ALSO INCLUDED "THE SEXUAL OFFENDERS OF WHICH THE MOST RECOGNIZED FORMS ARE THE EXHIBITIONISTS, THE VOYEURS, THE RAPISTS, THE CHILD MOLESTERS, ETC."

LESBIANA

86. DESIRE BY CLEMENT WOOD. BERKELEY, 1950 (RELEASED 1958).

A COLLECTION OF SENSATIONAL SHORT STORIES. TWO OF THE STORIES ARE ON OVERT LESBIANISM. THE WRITING IS FAST PACED AND COMPETENT BUT THE EMOTIONAL CONTENT WAS DESIGNED FOR A MALE AUDIENCE.

87. IN CASE OF EMERGENCY BY GEORGES SIMENON. DOUBLEDAY, 1958.

TAUT PSYCHOLOGICAL NOVEL BY A FRENCH MASTER OF HUMAN EMOTION. LAWYER LUCIEN GOBILLOT DEFENDS STREET WAIF YVETTE AND HER "GIRL FRIEND" ON ROBBERY CHARGE. HE WINS THE CASE, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE, IN FACT, GUILTY. YVETTE BECOMES LUCIEN'S MISTRESS BUT CHEATS AND FLIRTS CONSTANTLY. THEN SHE FALLS ILL AND LUCIEN HIRES AN APARTMENT FOR HER AND A NICE YOUNG MAID, JEANINE. YVETTE SUDDENLY DECIDES TO SPEND HER EVENINGS AT HOME. EXCELLENT WRITING WITH AN ASTONISHING DENOUEMENT.

88. THE EVIL FRIENDSHIP BY VIN PACKER. FAWCETT, 1958.

IT IS A SAD STATE OF AFFAIRS WHEN AN ADMITTED LESBIAN MUST CONTINUOUSLY AND VITUPERATIVELY DENOUNCE LESBIANISM. THIS WELL DOCUMENTED, TRUE STORY OF TWO YOUNG TEENAGE GIRLS SUFFERING FROM PARANOIA COUPLED WITH DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR HARDLY PRESENTS A PICTURE OF TYPICAL LESBIAN RELATIONSHIPS. THESE PITIFUL CHILDREN PLAN AND EXECUTE THE MURDER OF ONE OF THEIR MOTHERS. MISS PACKER IS ALSO ANN ALDRICH, AUTHORESS OF "WE WALK ALONE" AND "WE, TOO, MUST LOVE".

89. GIRL ALONE BY CHRISTA WINSLOE. TRANSLATED BY AGNES NEILL SCOTT, NEW YORK, 1936.

THE HETEROSEXUAL HEROINE, IN A PERIOD OF CONFUSION AND UNHAPPINESS, TAKES REFUGE WITH A LESBIAN ACQUAINTANCE.

I am a Lesbian

A recent addition to the ever growing list of "Lesbiana" is a paperback book entitled "I Am a Lesbian" by Lora Sela. Published by Saber Books of Fresno, Calif., the novel is designed to appeal to the reader looking for a thrill. It does have its more serious aspects, however, witness page 26.

The author, who has written this book under a pen name, has also written other works dealing with the subject of Lesbianism, using her true name.

In a letter to THE LADDER she has put forth her reasons for writing "I Am a Lesbian", reasons which we think are valid and worthwhile, and which the book fulfills. She states:

"I agreed to give the publisher overt sex scenes IF he would allow me to get my own propaganda over - to gain understanding and tolerance for Lesbians with the readers of these books.

"According to some fan mail response which came as the first result of the book being on sale (mainly in the South and East at first) I have been successful. Many men, who had little or no conception of Lesbianism, have written appreciative letters saying they now understand what it's all about and that they think the Lesbians have a right to live their lives without interference.

"After all, ALL segments of society must be approached in the attempt to gain understanding. To reach the persons who chose a novel for its sex content you cannot plug for understanding without also stressing sex scenes. It is entirely different in articles and non-fiction, as you realize I know. But to reach this particular reading public I did it the only way it could be done, as far as I know."

The problem of reaching the "mass audience" is a serious one for the homophile. Perhaps this book is one answer.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14 - DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS BUSINESS MEETING AT 8 P.M., 2174 CALIFORNIA ST., SAN FRANCISCO, BASEMENT APARTMENT.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 16 - GAB 'N JAVA AT 3927 ARMY ST., 8 P.M. A "FIRST-RUN" SHOWING OF MOVIES, SLIDES AND STILL PICTURES TAKEN AT DOB FUNCTIONS THROUGH THE YEARS. ALL ARE URGED TO ATTEND AND, MOST ESPECIALLY, TO BRING ANY PHOTOGRAPHS YOU MAY HAVE OF DOB DOINGS. IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY PHOTOS OF THAT TYPE, BRING SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE ONES TO SHARE WITH THE GROUP.

JANUARY 30-FEBRUARY 1 - ONE'S ANNUAL MIDWINTER INSTITUTE IN LOS ANGELES. MAKE YOUR PLANS NOW TO ATTEND THIS ALWAYS STIMULATING AND CHALLENGING EVENT. DETAILS AVAILABLE AT THE DOB OFFICES.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7 - HELP ASSEMBLE AND MAIL THE LADDER. IT IS FUN IN A SOCIABLE WAY. FROM NOON ON AT THE DOB OFFICES.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14 - ANNUAL VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY FOR MEMBERS AND GUESTS. RESERVATIONS TO ONE OF THE OFFICERS OR TO THE DOB OFFICE BY THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12 PLEASE!

SUNDAY, MARCH 15 - THE NOW TRADITIONAL ST. PATRICK'S DAY BRUNCH OF THE DOB. RESERVE THIS DATE AND BRING ALL YOUR FRIENDS, MALE AND FEMALE. THIS IS A WONDERFUL WAY TO INTRODUCE PEOPLE TO THE DOB. MORE DETAILS IN THE FEBRUARY LADDER.

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DOB NOW HAS AN ACTIVE CHAPTER IN NEW YORK AND GROUPS FORMING IN RHODE ISLAND AND LOS ANGELES. ADDRESS IN NEW YORK IS DOB, 1133 BROADWAY. IN RHODE ISLAND WRITE TO P.O. BOX 14, WEST WARWICK. THOSE IN THE LOS ANGELES AREA WHO ARE INTERESTED SHOULD WRITE TO DOB HEADQUARTERS IN SAN FRANCISCO.

READERS RESPOND

"INCREASING PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY CHURCHES INDICATE THEIR GROWING AWARENESS OF SEX AS A NECESSARY, MUTUALLY-ENJOYABLE ACT RATHER THAN A SIN. LOOK MAGAZINE'S NOV. 25 ARTICLE BY AN ASST. PROF. OF PSYCHOLOGY AT DUKE UNIVERSITY REPORTS ON A SURVEY OF MINISTERS, LEAVING NO QUESTION AS TO THEIR OWN UNSOLVED PROBLEMS RESULTING FROM REPRESSION, AND THEIR UNPREPAREDNESS TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS OF OTHERS.

"ONE MINISTER WAS MARRIED 15 YEARS BEFORE HE LEARNED HE HAD THE RIGHT TO ENJOY SEX. (WHAT HAD HE TOLD OTHERS ALL THAT TIME, AND HOW FAR HAD HIS UNHAPPY CONVICTIONS SEEPED INTO THE LIVES OF LISTENERS?) CONVERSELY, A PASTOR'S WIFE STATED PEOPLE IN THEIR CHURCH WOULD BE HORRIFIED IF THEY KNEW SHE AND HER HUSBAND FIND PLEASURE IN SEX. (TO HIDE THIS HEALTHY CONDITION, WHAT HAD HE ADVOCATED TO HIS LISTENERS?) ONLY 15% OF MINISTERS ARE DOING COMPETENT COUNSELING, 35% WILL NOT GO OUT ON A LIMB, 50% STILL PREACH THAT SEX IS EVIL.

"MINISTERS' OWN PROBLEMS DIRECTLY RESULTING FROM REPRESSION RANGED FROM MASTURBATION TO INFIDELITY AND CREATED NUMEROUS TRAGEDIES WITHIN THEIR MARRIAGE WALLS. ANOTHER HURDLE NOW LOOMING IS THE CONGREGATION'S RESISTANCE TO REVERSED TEACHING BECAUSE 'PEOPLE LEARNED THEIR CHURCH-TAUGHT LESSON TOO WELL.'

"RELIGIOUS LEADERS HAVE CONVINCED THEIR FOLLOWERS THAT SEX IS ONE OF THE WORST SINS, AND THESE LEADERS HAVE SINCERELY TRIED TO BELIEVE IT. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ESTIMATE THE WRECKAGE ATTRIBUTABLE TO REPRESSION OR ITS DEADLY COUNTERPART, SELF-CONDEMNATION.

"TO THE LESBIAN WHO DOES NOT ACCEPT HERSELF, THE SIN OF SEX LIES

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ONLY IN HOMOSEXUALITY. THE CHURCH HAS LONG BELIEVED THAT SIN LIES IN SEX ITSELF. THE GUILT-PLAGUED LESBIAN, THEN, HAS TAKEN THE CHURCH'S BELIEF OF GENERAL SEX SIN AND APPLIED IT SPECIFICALLY TO HER OWN LESBIANISM. IF SHE WERE A HETEROSEXUAL ENJOYING SEX AND HER CHURCH CONSIDERED THIS SINFUL, AND IF SHE WERE SENSITIVE TO THESE TEACHINGS, SHE WOULD STILL SUFFER SEX GUILT.

"STATED ONE MINISTER: 'A MAN IN OUR CHURCH HAS COME TO ME WITH A HOMOSEXUAL PROBLEM. WHERE CAN I SEND HIM FOR HELP?' THE ARTICLE CONTINUES: 'NINETY PER CENT OF THE MINISTERS HAVE FACED PROBLEMS OF HOMOSEXUALITY IN THEIR MINISTRY. IN A SURVEY THIS FALL, PRESBYTERIAN PASTORS RANKED HOMOSEXUALITY AS THE PROBLEM THEY FELT LEAST ABLE TO DEAL WITH.'

"THESE FEW LEADERS HAVE ADMITTED INABILITY TO DEAL WITH HOMOSEXUALITY. WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS WHO MADE UP THE 90%? ARE THEY STILL THREATENING--BY WORDS OR IMPLICATION--HELL FIRE AND DAMNATION? HATE IS HATE, WHETHER INFLICTED UPON ANOTHER OR UPON ONESELF, AND ITS EFFECT IS SHATTERING. THE MORE THE HOMOSEXUAL HATES HIMSELF, THE MORE HE NEEDS LOVE. HE TURNS FINALLY TO RELIGION, HOPING TO LEARN THAT GOD LOVES HIM (AND HE DOES), BUT HE WILL NOT HEAR THIS FROM THE LIPS OF ONE WHO HAS BEEN EDUCATED TO BELIEVE THAT TO ENJOY ANY KIND OF SEX PROHIBITS MAN FROM BEING LOVED BY GOD. WHERE DID THE HOMOSEXUAL'S SELF-CONDEMNATION ORIGINATE? FROM CHURCH TEACHINGS, EITHER DIRECT OR INDIRECT. HOW THEN CAN HE EXPECT TO RECEIVE COMFORT FROM THE VERY SOURCE OF HIS FRUSTRATION?

"SEX REPRESSION REFERS NOT ONLY TO INDIVIDUALS WHO RESIST ALL SEXUAL ACTIVITY BUT TO THOSE WHO, HAVING PARTICIPATED IN OVERT SEXUALITY, REFUSE TO MENTION IT 'THE MORNING AFTER', OR REFUSE TO ACKNOWLEDGE WHAT THEY ARE BECAUSE OF IT, OR HESITATE TO DISCUSS IT FREELY WITH THEIR PARTNER IN ORDER TO INSURE FREQUENT, LASTING FULFILLMENT OF THE PHYSICAL EXPRESSION OF LOVE.

"TREMENDOUS STRIDES HAVE BEEN TAKEN AND EVENTUALLY THERE WILL BE COMPLETE CHANGE OF SEX ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF THOSE WHO HAVE PREACHED AGAINST IT, BUT RE-EDUCATION IN RELIGION IS ALWAYS RELATIVELY SLOW. IN THE MEANTIME, THOSE WHO WAIT FOR THE CONSENTING NOD ARE MISERABLE. WHAT OF THE MULTITUDES OF HETEROSEXUALS WHO LED TORTURED LIVES OF REPRESSION, FINISHED THEIR LIFE SPAN, AND ARE NOT HERE TO REAP THE BENEFIT OF THEIR RELIGIOUS LEADER'S CHANGING ATTITUDE? WHAT OF HOMOSEXUALS (LAST TO BE UNDERSTOOD)

WHO ARE LIVING THEIR LIVES IN REPRESSION ACCENTUATED BY SELF-CONDEMNATION AND WHO, YEARS FROM NOW, MIGHT LEARN THERE WAS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR IT? FOR THE PRESENT, HOPE LIES IN EACH INDIVIDUAL'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE CHALLENGE TO THINK FOR HIMSELF!

"YOU OWE IT TO YOURSELF TO GO FORWARD WITH HEAD HIGH, UNSHACKLED BY THE LIMITING SLOW POISON OF SELF-CONDEMNATION, WHICH IMPRISONS PROGRESS BY ROBBING THE INDULGER OF PRODUCTIVE IDEAS AND ENERGY. YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO A WORLD SEETHING WITH OPPORTUNITY MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO REMAIN UNREVEALED FOR WANT OF A SENSE OF WORTHINESS. YOUR INHERENT RIGHT TO ADVANCE MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO DISINTEGRATE FOR WANT OF STRENGTH TO RISE UP OF YOURSELF. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO CLAIM A FULL, HAPPY, USEFUL LIFE - AS A LESBIAN."

Z.N., SAN LEANDRO, CALIF.

* * * * *

"WHEN WILL WE BE ACCEPTED AS HUMAN BEINGS, AND NOT AS QUEERS OR FREAKS?

"WILL THE GENERAL PUBLIC ALWAYS BE IGNORANT TO THE FACT THAT WE ARE NOT MENTALLY SICK OR ABNORMAL IN ANY WAY?

"THE MAJORITY OF US ARE FORCED TO LIVE TWO LIVES. ONE IN OUR WORK AND IN PUBLIC, THE OTHER, FOR MOST OF US, WITH OUR FAMILIES.

"WE ONLY WANT TO BE ACCEPTED INTO SOCIETY AS OURSELVES, TO LIVE AND LOVE AS WE CHOOSE.

"I HAVE EVERY HOPE AND CONFIDENCE THE DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS WILL HELP TO EDUCATE AND ENLIGHTEN THE PUBLIC THAT HOMOSEXUALS ARE NORMAL HUMAN BEINGS."

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"AM PARTICULARLY ENAMORED OF ABIGAIL SANFORD IN THE NOVEMBER LADDER - THE POETRY IS FIRST RATE - THE BEST I'VE SEEN IN A LONG WHILE OUTSIDE OF THE TWO OR THREE DEL MARTIN POEMS IN THE LADDER. BACK TO ABIGAIL - I LIKED THEM ALL, BUT I LIKED THE TWO SONNETS BEST - IN PARTICULAR THE 'SONNET OUT OF SERENITY'.

"I THINK THESE TWO ARE AS GOOD AS ANY MR. SHAKESPEARE-MARLOWE EVER WROTE - THE SUBJECT MATTER IS SIMILAR AND THE EXECUTION FLAWLESS. I LIKED THE LAST FIVE LINES OF 'HORIZONS' - FOR THEMSELVES; THEY ARE EXQUISITE. I ADMIRED 'HEALING' AND 'VIGNETTE' IN A REMOVED INTELLECTUAL WAY, BUT THE SONNETS GOT HOT TEARS ALL OVER THEM.

"I ENJOYED AUDREY KERN'S 'A POEM'. ANYMORE BY HER? ALSO ENJOYED 'PERFECT CONTROL' BY VERN NIVEN VERY MUCH...THIS ONE WAS TRULY EXCELLENT TO MY MIND. ALSO LIKED 'THE REPRESSED LESBIAN' ARTICLE VERY MUCH."

STEN RUSSELL, LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

* * * * *

PLEASE LET US HAVE YOUR COMMENTS - GOOD AND BAD. THIS IS YOUR MAGAZINE AND WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU. IF POSSIBLE, PLEASE KEEP YOUR LETTERS SHORT. OUR SPACE IS LIMITED AND WE LIKE TO PRINT AS MANY POINTS OF VIEW AS POSSIBLE. - ED.

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